

A TALK ABOUT PADDYLAND.

I HAVE been asked to write an article on "The customs of Paddyland," but really I do not feel equal to the task, neither have I the time to spend over a good composition of such. I am just going to "talk" about it instead, so here I start!

Ladies and gentlemen, unaccustomed as I am to *public speaking*, I take this favourable opportunity afforded to my unworthy self of *writing* a few notes for the students' *private* Magazine (may it always remain such!).

I came to Ireland in January, 1898, and first landed at Cork. I opened my eyes at once and expected to see pigs (this remark may be appreciated by some of my more secret acquaintances at Ambleside!) but to my bitter disappointment I couldn't see one, though I had heard some grunting on the steamer! Instead of swine I saw asses! and such a show of poor little beasts I never before witnessed. The boat was met by the Irish jaunting cars, which are really very comfortable, if they have good springs and a good *four-legged* piece of horseflesh in front. Donkey-carts also were numerous. Passengers crossed the city on cars, while the luggage was transferred by means of these donkey-carts. To compare the out-going hansoms, etc., from Euston Station with this file of luggage-laden donkey-carts was most amusing. Nevertheless, I heartily enjoyed it. The city of Cork is beautifully situated on the harbour, and the water was looking so blue on that particular day. The Bandon and S.C. Railway strike was on just then, and we had to go to a town called Skibbereen, 60 miles from Cork, on this line. It seemed very strange. There were police stationed all along the line, and one policeman was in the guard's van of each train. The South of Ireland is most enchanting; very hilly and consequently there are many lakes, tho' at Ambleside we should have termed these lakes tarns, they are so small, but, oh! so pretty! The hills are covered with gorse; this was in full bloom; it seemed as if one were living in a country of gold, and the air was so laden with its scent.

The villages down South are very pretty, but most quaint. It was so funny to go into a dwelling-room in which were chickens, pigs,

cows, goats, etc., etc., etc., all standing around the door — some inside, some outside.

Then nearly all the women and children go about barefooted; and the women wear quite a short skirt with a shawl over their heads, hats being quite a luxury. On Sundays the women wear a long black cloak, reaching to the feet, with an enormous hood, but few of them wear this hood, they prefer to have their heads uncovered, and the consequence is they have beautiful heads of hair. These cloaks, which I mentioned, are heirlooms in most cases, and some of them are very costly. I saw one which cost £8, and that means a good deal to an Irish peasant. The men dress in all possible ways, but the true Irishman's dress is a top-hat — not of the latest shape! — a long coat of freize, a short waistcoat, and tight knee-breeches with brassbuttons at the knees. Let me introduce you to Pat in your imagination.

The brogue is most charming, so very musical, and not very difficult to understand once one is used to it, but as for the true Irish! I never could make head or tail of it. Potato growing is, as of course you know, greatly carried on here, and it is very interesting to watch the process of planting. One hires — for next to nothing — some old women to piece the potatoes. (I forget the technical term). Two women explained to me why they cut up the potatoes, and how it had to be done, and thus with their explanations and my botanical knowledge of the structure of the "pratty" I was able to fully comprehend. Then the pieces are given to men, wearing large sacking aprons with a pocket in them, which they fill with the "buds." They have a long spade, not like "English" ones, but ones with very long handles, taller than the man, they slit open the ground and drop a piece in, and this is done *so* rapidly. There is a row of men planting, then comes a row of men behind to put down the earth where the potato was planted. There are very, very few agricultural machines used, and all work is done in a most primitive way. Every Irishman — exceptions prove the rule — has his horse, which he rides, without saddle, to market. A market day in an Irish village is too comical; the donkey-carts are laden with pigs going or coming back; the women sit in the cart and only their heads and shoulders are visible; one of the children generally drives the steed.

Then at Easter I spent a most enjoyable time at Killarney, and was most hospitably entertained by Mrs. Magill and household — (she may be an old acquaintance of some of you). I cannot

attempt to tell you what a good time I had with them. I confess I am simply charmed with the Irish, so far as I know them.

The scenery of Killarney is a dream of beauty. I can't compare it to Ambleside scenery, they are so totally different, and yet resemble each other. Everything is on such a small scale that the tourist is enabled to comprehend the surroundings. The lakes are not big, but dotted with fairy islands, with which the mountains, covered with woods, harmonize perfectly. May I advise those who have not been to Killarney and who want to go to some new place, just to spend a week or so there! The south coast is very wild and rocky, but most beautiful, and the expanse of the Atlantic is superb.

I came up to Belfast in June, and I was afraid I should feel very much in want of beautiful scenery, after the beauties of the South, but my fears were unfounded, I'm glad to say. This northern scenery is of a totally different character, it is far grander, though perhaps not quite so picturesque.

Belfast Lough is lovely and stands very well with Cave Hill as a background. The view from Cave Hill is splendid! The Lough lies at the foot, across the Lough is the pretty town of Holywood, then comes Strangford Lough, and beyond that the sea. Scotland and the Isle of Man can be distinctly seen from the Hill. To the West lies the grandest of British Lakes, Lough Neagh, looking like another sea, to the South lie the beautiful Mourne mountains. Life is totally different up here to what it is in the South. There is no more play! Instead, Life means Work! Belfast is a very enterprising town, and rapidly increasing; everyone has an eye to business! It is much more modern than the South. The Scotch element is easily to be seen, but I must say I prefer the Southern to the Northern people; but the hospitality of both prevents any uncharitable thoughts.

I think I would rather head this "A letter from Paddyland," as I feel I have fallen far short of relating the customs of this country.

With my humble apologies for this very inferior contribution, I beg to remain an enthusiastic member of the O.S.A.

A. M. Y.

LETTER FROM NEW VICE-PRESIDENT.

Miss Mason thinks the Students would like to see the following letter from their new Vice-President:—

HOLLY LODGE,
CAMPDEN HILL, W.

MY DEAR MISS MASON,—

During my pleasant visit to Scale How in June, you asked me to write you a letter for your young folk, embodying a few words of wise counsel I had had in my own youth from kind friends and teachers, and also some little helps to the art of living with others, which I wish I had had brought before me in my early days, but which I have had to find out through, perhaps, some sorrowful experience.

One of the first things I can remember hearing Mrs. Gaskell saying (I lived hard by her house in my young married days) to her own daughters, myself, and one or two other young people gathered around her was: Never to lose an opportunity of seeing any object of interest which lay in our path; for instance, a beautiful ruin, or one of our English or other Cathedrals, or the house of any famous man, or, indeed, any sight which offered.

I have often noted since, in myself and others, an indifference or an indolence, or a want of imagination, which has come between us and one of these pleasures, and I have only found out in late middle life how wise was the counsel, and how much I have missed for want of always following it. One reason, I think, for seeing and enjoying whatever comes in one's way is the material for pleasant converse which it stores up in one's memory, and it is this variety of experience, and this fact of having touched on so many sides of life, which heightens our power of sympathy, and makes us able to contribute so much more to other people's pleasure, and to their deeper and higher life, than we could if we had not ourselves hailed and embraced these enrichments of our own nature.

Another bit of knowledge I would like to share with you is: that it is so much better at the first view of anything, or at the